**ELA Pre AP 9: Vocabulary words for Greek Theatre/ Oedipus the King**

For the definitions not listed, it is your job to find them in the notes I have given you, the videos you have watched, the worksheets you have done or on the blog. I suggest making cue cards for these terms in order to help you study.

1. **Dramatis Personae-** refers to the roles of the actors of the play. In Greek, the actors were called *hypokrites*, meaning one who answers, in this case, the chorus. The Latin word *personae*, so obviously related to the English 'person,' refers to the mask of an actor, perhaps because it's through that mask that the sound comes, although that etymology has been questioned
2. **Anagnorisis -** Startling discovery; moment of epiphany; time of revelation when a character discovers his true identity. Anagnorisis occurs in *Oedipux Rex* when Oedipus realizes who he is.
3. **Harmartia-** Character flaw or judgment error of the [protagonist](http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides6/antigone.html#protagonist) of a Greek [tragedy](http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides6/antigone.html#tragedy). *Hamartia* is derived the Greek word *hamartanein*, meaning *to err* or *to make a mistake*. The first writer to use the term was Aristotle, in *The Poetics*.
4. **Catastrophe-** Denouement (resolution) of a tragedy in the drama of ancient Greece.
5. **Deux(s) ex machina-** [Latin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_language), meaning "god from the machine. It is a [plot device](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plot_device) where a seemingly unsolvable problem is suddenly resolved by the unexpected intervention of some new event, character, ability or object OR a God.
6. **Catharsis-** In literature and art, a purification of emotions. The Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) used the term to describe the effect on the audience of a tragedy acted out on a theater stage. This effect consists in cleansing the audience of disturbing emotions, such as fear and pity, thereby releasing tension. This purgation occurs as a result of either of the following reactions: (1) Audience members resolve to avoid conflicts of the main character–for example, Oedipus in *Oedipus* Rex and Creon in *Antigone*–that arouse fear or pity or (2) audience members transfer their own pity and fear to the main character, thereby emptying themselves of these disquieting emotions. In either case, the audience members leave the theater as better persons intellectually, morally, or socially. They have either been cleansed of fear of pity or have vowed to avoid situations that arouse fear and pity. In modern usage, catharsis may refer to any experience, real or imagined, that purges a person of negative emotions.
7. **Chorus-**
8. **Tragedy (greek)-** The focus of this genre was about love, loss, pride, and the abuse of power. These were often about the gods and men. Usually one of the characters commit a great crime then realizes his error.
9. **Satyr-** These were short plays that were performed between the acts of tragedies. They made fun of the predicament of the tragedy’s character.
10. **Comedy (greek) -** The comedy often mocked men in power.
11. **Hubris/Hybris-** Great pride. Hybris often is the character flaw ([hamartia](http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides6/antigone.html#hamartia)) of a [protagonist](http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides6/antigone.html#protagonist) in Greek drama. Pride was considered a grave sin because it placed too much emphasis on individual will, thereby downplaying the will of the state and endangering the community as a whole. Because pride makes people unwilling to accept wise counsel, they act rashly and make bad decisions.
12. **Dramatic irony-** Failure of a character to see or understand what is obvious to the audience. Oedipus, for example, was unaware early on of what the audience knew: that he was married to his own mother, Jocasta.
13. **Thespian-** Noun meaning *actor* or *actress*; adjective referring to any person or thing pertaining to Greek drama or drama in general. The word is derived from *Thespis*, the name of  a Greek of the 6th Century B.C. who was said to have been the first actor on the Greek stage
14. **Dionysia-** Patron god of Greek drama; god of wine and vegetation. Dionysus, called Bacchus by the Romans, was the son of Zeus and one of the most important of the Greek gods. Dionysus died each winter and was reborn each spring, a cycle his Greek devotees identified with the death and rebirth of nature. He thus symbolized renewal and rejuvenation, and each spring the Greeks celebrated his resurrection with ceremonies that eventually included drama contests. The most prestigious of these festivals was the Greater Dionysia, held in Athens for five days and  participated in by playwrights such as Sophocles, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, and Euripides. Festivals held in villages and small towns were called the Rural Dionysia.
15. **Dionysus- see Dionysia**
16. **Peripeteia/Reversal-** In a tragedy, sudden reversal of fortune from good to bad or a turning point
17. **Parabasis-** an ode in which the chorus addresses the audience to express opinions of the author, including his views on politics, social trends, and other topics
18. **Dithyramb-** Choral hymn that praised [Dionysus](http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides6/antigone.html#Dionysus), god of wine and revelry, and sometimes told a story. In his great work *Poetics*, Aristotle wrote that dithyrambs inspired the development of Greek tragic plays, such as those of Sophocles. The first "play" supposedly took place in the 6th Century B.C. when Thespis, a member of a chorus, took the part of a character in a dithyramb. The action shifted back and forth between him and the chorus. See also [thespian](http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides6/antigone.html#thespian).
19. **Poetics-** Important work by Aristotle written about 335 B.C. It analyzes Greek theater and outlines its origin and development. One of its theses is that literature and other forms of art imitate the activity of humans. Tragedy is the higher form of the playwright's craft, Aristotle says, because it imitates the action of noble persons and depicts lofty events. Comedy, on the other hand, focuses on ordinary humans and events.
20. **Zeus -** King of the Olympian gods.
21. **Skene**
22. **Orchestra**
23. **Theatron**
24. **Parados**
25. **Prologue**
26. **Parados**
27. **Episode/scenes**
28. **Odes**
29. **Paean**
30. **Exodus**

Oh ya…A few more were forgotten!

1. **Pathos**- a quality that makes people feel sympathy and sadness (appeals to the audience’s emptions)
2. **Motif**- reoccurring subject or theme. It is something important, such as an idea or subject, that is repeated throughout a book, story etc.
3. **Tragic hero –** protagonist of a tragedy. Destined for downfall, suffering or defeat
4. **Ethos-** Greek word meaning "character" that is used to describe the guiding beliefs or ideals that characterize a community, nation, or ideology as in the guiding beliefs of a person, group, or organization
5. **Logos- prologue (pro and logos) or prelimary speech**
6. **Double entendre -** speech in which a spoken or written phrase is devised to be or is unintentionally understood in either of two ways, one which is usually about sex or is considered dirty